

## Film Review: The Ultimate History Lesson with John Taylor Gatto

Posted on March 22, 2012 by Monica Perez ([www.TheMonicaPerezShow.com](http://www.TheMonicaPerezShow.com))

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About the Monica Perez Show: *Monica Perez is a married mother of three who grew up the youngest of nine children in a blue-collar Roman Catholic family. She was born in Brooklyn and raised in the suburbs of New York City. Monica worked her way through college as a waitress in addition to receiving numerous scholarships.*

*She has an associate's degree in liberal arts from Rockland Community College, a bachelor's degree from Harvard University with a concentration in economics, a law degree from Stanford Law School and a master's in business administration from Stanford Graduate School of Business. She is a Chartered Financial Analyst and a member of the bar of the State of New York. Monica has worked as a commercial banker and an investment banker, among other things.*

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If you've never heard of John Taylor Gatto you are really missing something. John Taylor Gatto was New York City Teacher of the Year three times when he worked in Harlem. He quit his job, while still holding the title of Teacher of the Year, in an oped article in the *Wall Street Journal* saying that he no longer wished to hurt children. Gatto is one of those very rare people (like Ron Paul) who have the intelligence, character, drive and interest to pursue the truth for its own sake, to actually succeed in uncovering some of it and to share it with those of us ready to recognize it.

I clicked on the link to this five-hour interview with John Taylor Gatto and proceeded to watch the ENTIRE thing in ONE SITTING!!! It's just fascinating. Although Gatto is a wealth of information, insight and revelations, he is also a joy to watch. Witnessing his honesty, curiosity, intelligence, sanity and good judgment are testaments to what is finest in man and I doubt I would tire of listening to him ever—so rich, broad and deep is his wealth of knowledge.

But beyond the general joy of learning I get when I listen to Gatto, I find that his contribution is most relevant to me in two specific ways: First, Gatto lays out a comprehensive, novel (nowadays anyway) and scrupulously thought-out and tested approach to education. Second, Gatto explains the history of modern schooling and how and why we moved away from his traditional, intuitive approach to educating our young to what we have today, which he clearly distinguishes as schooling *as opposed to* education.

The first element—an alternative approach to education—Gatto lays out and illustrates with examples from his own experiences as a teacher. Unfortunately, the prospect of trying to implement this radically different approach to educating my own children within the structure of my typical suburban life daunts me. This documentary provides an

introduction to the idea of what it means to educate our children, both with respect to goals and to methods, but it is not intended to provide step by step instruction on how to make this happen overnight in your own life, rather it's intended, it seems, to prompt us to begin the journey. My guess is homeschooling is a great start (and end?) but it would take me, for one, some time to get used to the lifestyle change THAT would entail!

The second element—the history and purposes of modern schooling—is nothing short of fascinating. Anyone who is prone to dismiss conspiracy theories as baseless notions held by irrational nutjobs, should watch this documentary. Gatto doesn't go off on the Illuminati or the New World Order, he doesn't rave about the power elite or the Anglo-American establishment, but as his story unfolds and he merely tells of the history of modern education—which is really the history of today's society—the books, events, people, relationships, institutions and theories he has come to understand over the course of his earnest investigations speak for themselves. The rare occasions when he was opining rather than reporting he clearly marks. Of course his conclusions based on what he's uncovered are also his own, but he relates his facts and reasoning along the way and make it clear these are the most rational conclusions given the evidence.

I had long hoped to interview John Taylor Gatto for this website, but after having watched this documentary, I don't feel I'd have anything to add. The website of the group that put this together is [TragedyandHope.com](http://TragedyandHope.com).